

March 19, 2007

Chairman Jore, members of the Committee, my name is Stacey Anderson. I am here representing myself in support of SB 89.

As a former employee of DPHHS and a current, frequent visitor to the Capitol, it is critical as a breastfeeding mother to have access to safe, clean, and private facilities in order to feed my son or support my efforts to pump. As a DPHHS employee, I found the bathroom not conducive to pumping – the one bathroom that was touted as the breastfeeding room really was a single stall bathroom with an old couch and a privacy screen that did nothing to provide privacy for my pumping or disguise the fact that I was in a public bathroom. Given that, I made every effort to avoid pumping and instead used every break and lunch break I had to run out to my daughter's daycare to feed her. I was lucky to have the support of a flexible supervisor, but I suspect many state employee's are not so lucky.

Today, with my son in tow, I've found it really challenging to find privacy or baby-friendly rooms in the Capitol. As the seat of our state's government, it is important to make it as accessible as possible to all Montana citizens. Oddly, the fourth floor women's room is comfortable a private, but the average visitor to the Capitol would be unaware of that option without discreet placement of signs around the building to direct her to that location. It's also noteworthy to mention that there are no changing tables in the Capitol – truly a challenge to any visitor who might have an infant.

I urge you to support SB 89 – breastfeeding and pumping are critical to the health of our babies. Visitors and employee's of the State of Montana should have a government that supports healthy kids and this is one small step in the right direction.